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ART. I.—*The Poets and Poetry of America*; an Article in the Foreign Quarterly Review, for January, 1844. London.

THE earliest notices we have of Britain represent it as fruitful in barbarians, tin, and lead. It has continued so ever since. The Greeks knew something of it, but their notions were vague and uncertain; the Phœnicians, who were to the ancients what the American navigators are to the moderns, found out the island, and drove a profitable trade, exchanging trinkets, that always please the fancy of barbarians and children, for the useful metals which their advanced civilization knew how to put to good use. Herodotus is supposed to have included it in his *Cassiterides* or Tin islands. The barbarous condition of the inhabitants is indicated even by the name, which is derived from the old word *brit*, meaning painted: for they painted their bodies, like the North American Indians.

Cæsar made two expeditions into Britain, as an interlude in his Gallic conquests; and from his graphic pen we have two or three paragraphs describing their manners,—that is, all the manners they had; and it is curious to see how many traits are still preserved, in spite of innumerable mutations, and the silent action of more than eighteen centuries. *Pecorum*, says he, *magnus numerus*; “they have a vast number of sheep”; they have them now. *Ære utuntur importato*; but this at present is unnecessary, as they have brass enough of their own. The ancient Britons thought it im-

pious to “taste the hare, the hen, and the goose”; this, with a great many other religious scruples, the modern Britons have thrown off; but they still raise game-cocks, *animi voluptatisque causâ*, “for the sake of intellectual delight.” In Cæsar’s time, the seaboard was settled by people who went over from Belgium, *prædae ac belli inferendi causâ*; and from these persons came not a little of the partiality for plunder and war, which has ever since been characteristic of the English people. The inhabitants of the interior, he states, fed on milk and flesh, and were clothed with skins. It must be admitted, that, in these respects, a great change has taken place, and for the worse; for, at present, great numbers of the British people are utterly unable to procure milk or flesh, and have no other skins to wear than their own. All the Britons dyed themselves with woad, which produced a blue color, and gave them a more horrible look—a thing quite unnecessary—in battle; the cerulean tint is now confined to the females, and its terrors are exhibited only in society. They did not cut the hair or shave the upper lip; and the same fashion exists to the present day among the dandies, who are their most direct descendants. *Uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communes*; and the records of Doctors’ Commons show, that, in these particulars, the English are not a whit behind their barbarous ancestors; nay, the present laws of England carry out the principle, so well stated by the Roman conqueror, *si qui sunt ex his nati, eorum habentur liberi, quo primum virgo queque deducta est.*

The poets, especially Virgil and Horace, make frequent allusions to the barbarity of the ancient Britons. Horace talks of bringing them in chains down the Sacred Way; of the remote Britons; of visiting in safety—which he never did—the Britons, *hospitibus feros*, “cruel to strangers”; language prophetic of the manner in which he was long afterwards mutilated by the ferocious Bentley; and, in another place, he hints at turning war, famine, and pestilence against the Persians and Britons, regarding them as equally extreme points from the centre of civilization. Virgil speaks of them as divided from the whole earth; which, in a moral sense, they have continued to be ever since.

Tacitus, in his admirable life of Agricola, gives some interesting notices of this barbarous people. He begins, in

his usual pithy style, by saying, *Britanniam qui mortales initio coluerint, indigenæ an adrecti, ut inter barbaros, parum compertum.* He then mentions the light or red hair of the Caledonians, and their brawny limbs ; and, in describing the whole nation, he says, they had the same bravery as the Gauls in demanding to be led into danger, and the same cowardice in running from it when it actually came. Here we see the very germ of John Bull's love of bullying ; though candor compels us to confess, that he stands fight a little better now than, according to the great historian, he did in former times. The Britons had a notion, too, that respectability consisted in driving a chariot, — *honestior auringa* ; undoubtedly the source of the modern reverence for a coach and six,—a feeling which is very nicely graduated for vehicles of every degree of pretension, down to a gig, — constituting what Carlyle very justly calls the “gigmanity” of the British nation. Tacitus proceeds to describe the physical peculiarities of the island, which he does in a masterly manner, and the description is as true to-day, in most particulars, as it was when first written. The Romans, for various reasons, but chiefly because they thought the play was not worth the candle, made but little progress in the conquest, until the enterprise was intrusted to the vigorous genius of Agricola. Even in the time of Quintilian, so little was known of this barbarous dependency, that he expressly affirms, that, in the schools of rhetoric, a common question discussed by the young students as an exercise in elocution was, whether Britain was an island or not ; and we are told by no less an authority than a committee of the House of Commons, that precisely the same question being put in the course of their inquiries on the subject of education, many Englishmen, born in the interior probably, exhibited the same geographical uncertainty as formerly existed in the Roman schools.

The early Druidical religion or superstition of these barbarians left its imprint on the national character, and may be traced to the present day. The ancient hierarchy, like the modern, had the exclusive right to teach the doctrines of religion, which they inculcated in verses that sometimes had a hidden meaning ; the modern Druids make no verses, and their sermons sometimes have no meaning at all. In other respects, they are very much the same ; like their predeces-

sors, they utter terrible curses on all who dissent from them ; they advocate the keeping of religious knowledge from the people, especially at the great Druidical establishment of Oxford, where the ancient superstitious rites are maintained with a punctilious observance worthy of the darkest ages. They insist on having the exclusive control of the education of the young ; and so great is their power, that, under its influence and the terror of their infuriated denunciations, a reformed House of Parliament recently refused to make a grant of money for a system of national education, unless it should be placed entirely under the direction of the modern Druids, the priests of the established church ; — so priest-ridden have the inhabitants of that Tin island been from the days of Cæsar and Tacitus.

Just as Roman civilization had gained a slight foothold in Britain, the disturbances in the empire compelled the government to withdraw their troops, and leave the half reclaimed barbarians to fall back into their aboriginal condition. Their labors of four centuries were thus completely lost ; and it is a striking proof of the stupidity of the British race, that, just before the Romans bade a final adieu to Britain, they had to “erect anew the wall of Severus, which was built entirely of stone, and which the Britons had not at that time artificers skilful enough to repair.” The Britons, then, did not know enough, after some four hundred years of training, to build a stone wall. They have not built many since, but have used hedges, which require less genius, and only need occasionally to be trimmed.

A modern historian judiciously remarks, that “the sudden, violent, and unprepared revolutions incident to barbarians are so much guided by caprice, and terminate so often in cruelty, that they disgust by the uniformity of their appearance ; and it is rather fortunate for letters, that they are buried in silence and oblivion.” This train of reflections was suggested to his mind by the contemplation of the *origines* of the English nation ; and it has been recalled to ours by the same process. We shall not, therefore, trace the formation of the national character through its successive stages, under the Saxon robbers, the Danish pirates, and the freebooting adventurers from Normandy, all of whom left distinct marks upon the moral development of the Englishman, until at length the constitution — as a nonentity, about

which a vast amount of nonsense is dealt out at every session of Parliament, is facetiously termed — was consolidated by the revolution through which the Prince of Orange received the crown ; — of whom it was said, by one who knew whereof he spoke, that “the receiver is as bad as the thief.”

Of a people descended from such a stock it would be unreasonable to expect either morals, manners, or poetry ; and we are not at all surprised or disappointed, therefore, by the unfavorable results of a cursory survey of their literature and their public and private history during the last century or two, and of their condition at the present time. The population of England is made up of masters and serfs, otherwise called the aristocracy and the people ; the former being the legitimate, or rather the illegitimate, descendants of the marauding tribes who conquered and settled the country ; and the latter being the present representatives of the barbarous and ignorant races who were subjugated by them. No other theory will account for the insufferable arrogance and haughtiness of the higher class, or the tame submissiveness and cringing servility of the inferior tribe. Among no people in the world, excepting perhaps the Hindoos, are the distinctions of caste more rigidly preserved than in Great Britain. Barriers and fences of every sort are multiplied with the most jealous care, to prevent the dreaded effects of a mixture of races ; and these obstructions are usually sufficient to preserve the purity of blood from any *known and acknowledged* contamination, except when a bankrupt man of rank condescends to repair his ruined fortunes by espousing the daughter of a wealthy merchant, or a titled debauchee forms a matrimonial connection with an actress or an opera-dancer. But usually, a peer and a tradesman, a baronet and a laborer, a country gentleman and one of his tenants, are the representatives respectively of what we might almost call two orders of being. It would be as great a blunder for an Englishman to put the two into the same class, as for a naturalist to place quadrupeds and *quadrumani* in the same order, or, in other words, to rank together a horse and a monkey. It is difficult to say which of the two persons is the most to be pitied, — the one for his overbearing insolence, or the other for the cowed and slavish manner in which he submits to it ; the one who browbeats his inferior with every token of lordly and supercilious contempt, or the

other, who, "with bated breath, and whispering humbleness," receives the full measure of scorn and contumely.

Some of the most offensive peculiarities of English manners, as they appear to foreigners, have resulted naturally from this absurdly exaggerated estimate of the importance of rank. Hence, an Englishman's coldness and reserve,—his sulkiness in mixed society,—his repulsive manner towards strangers,—his overbearing treatment of domestics and dependents,—his horror at the idea of dining at a *table d'hôte*, or of travelling in a crowded conveyance, where he might find himself "cheek by jowl" with an inferior. He manifests all the petty jealousy of a man who is himself half conscious, that his factitious claims to respect and distinction are vastly above his real merits. He is punctilious in exacting all the little observances of station and etiquette, in order that this mortifying consciousness may not be increased by the apparent insensibility of the world around him to his absurd pretensions. Hence, also, the discomposure that he suffers, when he becomes a traveller, and finds the people of continental Europe or of this country not at all inclined to respect those arbitrary distinctions of social life, on which so much stress is put in his own petty island. All the world laughs at a travelling John Bull and his ridiculous humors; his pride and his mortifications; his *hauteur* and his gullibility; his insolence and his ignorance. The polite Frenchman shrugs his shoulders and laughs at the haughty airs of "Mylord," and compares him to his own *bouledogue*; the supple Italian cheats him and despises him; the independent Yankee pesters him with questions, annoys him with cool sarcasm when he becomes testy, and treads most remorselessly on the corns of his self-esteem and his prejudices. Bull is obliged to suffer it all, and only finds his revenge, after he returns home, by writing a book to prove that all the nations of the earth are a set of Yahoos, except the inhabitants of enlightened England.

Illustrations of these remarks are so common, that it is useless to cite any, or to specify particular cases in which they are specially applicable. But one instance of the annoyances to which this class of travellers are subject is directly in point. Half the pleasure that an Englishman experiences at a public house in his own country consists in bullying the waiter, who is hectored most unmercifully about

all the faults, real or supposed, of the whole establishment ; and the cringing domestic receives the scarifying lecture with a subdued face and a patient shrug, “ for sufferance is the badge of all his tribe,” knowing that every box on the ear will be recompensed by a handsome *douceur* to his pocket. This same Englishman goes abroad, to America perhaps, and attempting to practise the same insolence in a hotel there, runs imminent risk of being kicked for his pains by the independent waiter, who, instead of being mollified by the subsequent offer of a shilling or a half crown, actually throws the intended gratuity in his customer’s face. The indignant traveller hurries home, and writes a book in a perfect frenzy, in which he expatiates, with great earnestness, upon the insufferable impertinence of republican domestics.

A writer in a late number of the Edinburgh Review, speaking in the name of the English nation, observes, with admirable complacency, “ We have a sound, rational, philosophical respect for birth.” Of course, this profoundly respectful feeling is entertained only on account of the high moral qualities that are invariably displayed by men of noble blood. We will mention a few facts, therefore, that may throw some light on the moral character of the nobility of England ; and, that the examples may not appear obscure or far-fetched, we will begin with royalty itself. George the Fourth, and his brother, the Duke of Cumberland and present King of Hanover, were probably the most profligate men in Great Britain. The character of the former was marked with almost every stain of moral turpitude that can dishonor and degrade a human being ; the latter was charged, and that not obscurely, with crimes at which human nature revolts. Before he came to the throne, the former was expelled from the Jockey Club for his dishonest practices ; he put a lie into the mouth of his champion in the House of Commons, in regard to his marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert ; he appeared as a beggar at the bar of that House, for money to pay the immense debts that he had incurred in his career of gambling, intemperance, and debauchery ; he was guilty of the meanest and foulest ingratitude towards his early friend, Sheridan ; he persecuted his wife to the death for incontinence, after he had separated from her without cause, and given her a “ letter of license,” and while, in his own private life, he was emulating the orgies of Tiberius at Capreae. All the world

knows the history of that disgusting trial, when a queen of England was brought to the bar of the House of Peers, for adultery ; and the storm of popular indignation, roused by the story of such nefarious and disgraceful conduct, was diverted from the guilty wife to fall upon the still more guilty husband. *Sed maxime in lubrico egit acceptâ in matrimonium Juliâ, impudicitiam uxoris tolerans aut declinans.*

Of the wicked and imbecile tyrant whom England has given to Hanover, we can only say, that he is a worthy brother of this English Tiberius. As there are some crimes with the bare mention of which we may not soil our pages, we will only allude to the death of his *valet de chambre*, and the foul circumstances which are supposed to have led to that event. One other passage of his life may be mentioned, as it is involved with the conduct of some other titled personages of the realm. Lady Grosvenor was prosecuted by her noble husband for an intrigue with this Duke of Cumberland, and the guilt of the two parties was fully established ; but the lady had recourse to recrimination, and produced abundant testimony to prove the low debaucheries of the Earl, so that his application for a divorce was refused. The facts here cited are no revival of secret scandals or half forgotten calumnies ; they stand on the records of the legal tribunals, and were published in all the newspapers of the day.

The next illustration of the morals of the royal family is even a more notorious one ; for the affair was investigated by Parliament, and the full and damning proof may be found in the published “ Debates.” One of the most stately monuments that now arrest the attention of the stranger in London is a circular column of stone, that rises to a great height in a fine situation, on the border of one of the parks. If the traveller asks what is its object, he is told that it was erected in honor of the Duke of York, another brother of George the Fourth, and one who was for a long time commander-in-chief of the British armies. If he asks further, by what virtuous or heroic deeds the Duke merited this high station during life, and this splendid and enduring monument to his memory, the answer is to be found in the proceedings of the House of Commons in 1809. He was then charged with allowing the profligate Mrs. Clarke, who had long been his mistress, to dispose of commissions in the army by bargain and sale ; and in the

investigation that followed, all the essential parts of the accusation were fully established. His connection with this abandoned woman was admitted, and British officers were not ashamed to confess, that they had purchased of her their promotion, which she had obtained by her influence with the Duke. He was compelled to resign the command of the army, but before two years had passed, a venal ministry reinstated him in office. To complete this picture of the royal family, we need only mention the guilty connection of the Duke of Clarence, another of these brothers, with the actress, Mrs. Jordan. The base-born offspring of this shameless union were placed by their father, when he became king of England, among the nobles of the land ; and the Fitz Clarences are still conspicuous in the English church, in fashionable society, and at the court of the youthful Queen.

“ These are thy gods, O Israel ! ” These are the members of that royal house of Brunswick, in whose veins flows the blood of the Plantagenets, the Tudors, and the Stuarts, and to whom England professes such unbounded loyalty. Such have been the lives and characters of the men who have profited by Englishmen’s “ sound, rational, philosophical respect for birth.” A more lucky family than that of George the Third was never known. Three of the royal profligates, whose conduct we have noticed, ascended a throne, and, since the days of the Roman emperors, never has the sceptre fallen into more weak and wicked hands. Their scandalous courts were often frequented by men of rank, whose morals were as corrupt, and whose lives as dissolute as their own. In our own day, we have seen a Minister of State and a Lord Chancellor, who had run away with other men’s wives, and subsequently married the partners of their infamy, admitted, with their consorts, to the councils and the drawing-rooms of their sovereign. As the facts are so notorious, it is only necessary to mention the names of the late Lord Holland and the present Sir Edward Sugden. The English people have a “ philosophical respect for birth,” and therefore they tolerate such things ; but nothing can equal their virtuous indignation at profligate conduct, when the offender is not of high rank. They collect in crowds to hoot a poor actor off the stage, for no other offence than that of “ disturbing the conjugal felicity of an alderman.”

An abundance of other facts might be cited, to show the

corruption and dissoluteness that exist in high places in England ; but the record is a disgusting one, and we forbear. We will merely allude to some very recent facts,—to the bankruptcy of Lord Huntingtower, the midnight exploits of the Marquess of Waterford, the notoriety of the noble lover of Madame Grisi, and the late prosecution of Lord Cardigan by Lord William Paget. The filthy details of this last case were spread out at length, a few months since, in the columns of the *Times*, the *Morning Chronicle*, and the *London Examiner*, and were thus brought to the knowledge of nearly every family in the land, by means of the very journals which profess a holy horror of the degraded and licentious condition of the newspaper press in America. And English writers, who witness and record such things, continue to boast of “the high standard of morals established in England,” and to contrast it, with great pride, with “Parisian laxity.”

As they are so fond of preaching morality to other nations, it may be worth while to look for a moment at the conduct of their clergy, their own instructors in virtue. In the course of the last century, a Doctor of Divinity was hanged for forgery ; and about thirty years ago, a Lord Bishop of Ireland, a scion of one of the noblest families in the realm, was compelled to fly his country, for a crime not fit to be mentioned. This wretch bore the title of Bishop of Clogher. Within a few months, the particulars of another case of clerical licentiousness have come to light. The Rev. Herbert C. Marsh, son of the distinguished bishop of that name, and rector of Barnave and prebendary of Peterborough, two situations in the church producing about six thousand dollars a year, one or both of which he has held for twelve years, appeared before a court of law to give evidence for establishing his own infamy. He had kept a mistress, and had been intimate with women of the town, both in London and Paris, for many years, while he was all the time wearing the robes, and officiating at the altar as a minister of religion. And these sacred offices and revenues he still holds, having suffered no other punishment than that of exposure and being prohibited from preaching,—a thing of no importance to him, as the active duties of his station are performed by a curate.

The common vices with which the dignitaries of the Eng-

lish church are chargeable will appear by a brief extract from a tract by Dr. Watson, himself a respectable and beneficed clergyman of the establishment. In the very act of confuting infidels and putting scoffers to silence, he was obliged to use this language of his brethren of the clergy.

“The lofty looks of lordly prelates shall be brought low; the supercilious airs of downy doctors and perjured pluralists shall be humbled; the horrible sacrilege of non-residents, who shear the fleece, and leave the flock, thus despoiled, to the charge of uninterested hirelings that care not for them, shall be avenged on their impious heads. Intemperate priests, avaricious clerks, and buckish parsons, those curses of Christendom, shall be confounded.”

Another unimpeachable witness respecting the character of the English clergy is Dr. Southey, among whose polemical writings is a most learned and argumentative defence of the English church. But in “*Espriella’s Letters*,” he is compelled to speak of the conduct of its priests as follows :

“The customs of England do not exclude the clergyman from any species of amusement; the popular preacher is to be seen at the theatre, and at the horse-race, bearing his part at the concert and the ball, making his court to old ladies at the card-table, and to young ones at the harpsichord; and in this way, if he does but steer clear of any flagrant crime or irregularity, (which is not always the case, for this order has had more than one Lucifer,) he generally succeeds in finding some widow or wanling spinster, with weightier charms than youth and beauty.”

When the nation is afflicted with such licentious kings and nobles, and such a profligate clergy, it is not surprising, that immorality and crime should prevail to a frightful extent among the lower classes. The aristocracy, with all the brutality which they inherited from their marauding ancestors, endeavoured to suppress these evils among their serfs, by the terrible severity of the punishments which they enacted. Nothing could equal the appalling character of the criminal code of England during the last century, except the number and the atrocity of the crimes against which it was directed. The laws of Draco were not half so bloody; the American Indian showed less ingenuity in torturing his prisoner at the stake. A hundred and twenty crimes were punishable with death; and Dr. Southey affirmed, in 1807,

that “ more persons annually suffer death in England than in the whole of Christendom besides.” The parricide and the fire-raiser were dragged to the scaffold, together with the poor thief who had stolen only a sheep, and the girl who had filched a few yards of lace from a shop. A criminal who refused to plead was laid upon his back, and enormous weights piled upon his breast till he was pressed to death. Women were burned alive at the stake for the same offences for which men were only hanged. As late as 1763, Mary Heald was burned alive at Chester, England, for poisoning her husband. Mrs. Hayes, a murdereress, was burned at London, about a century ago, and a crowd stood around, listening to her screams, and watching her vain efforts to push away the fagots. Indeed, there seems to be a mania among these brutal islanders for witnessing public executions. When one is to take place in London, the householders near the spot make large profits by letting out their windows to spectators, and noblemen and ladies of rank are their best customers. Lord William Paget and some ladies of his acquaintance were accommodated in this way at the recent execution of Courvoisier.

The most appalling severity was exercised, of course, on those wretched vassals who conspired to throw off the intolerable yoke of their tyrannical masters. The doom of traitors in this unhappy realm was one at which humanity sickens. The wretches were sentenced to be hanged, but to be cut down while still alive, their bowels to be torn out, and their bodies to be cut into four quarters, and sent to different parts of the land. The ghastly heads were severed from the trunks, and stuck up on spikes over a gate dividing the most crowded thoroughfare in London. Who does not recognize in these atrocities the savageness of the old Danish and Norman vikings and pirates, reducing the conquered barbarians of Britain to tame submission by their frightful cruelties ? To mangle, or in any way abuse the dead, has always been deemed an act worthy only of nations in the lowest stage of barbarism. And yet, till within a short period, along the great highways of England were erected numerous gibbets, on which the decaying carcasses of executed highwaymen were hung in chains. “ Some five and twenty years ago,” says Southey, writing in 1807, “ about a hundred such were exposed upon the heath (at Staines, a

few miles from London) ; so that, from whatever quarter the wind blew, it brought with it a cadaverous and pestilential odor." And this execrable barbarity was allowed by a people who pride themselves on their morality and refinement, and read grave lectures to foreign nations on their vicious conduct and cruel practices !

But all these severities were not adequate to repress the frightful propensity of the English for crime, and therefore a new expedient was to be tried. The attempt is now made to repress vice and wickedness, by thrusting out the participants in them to other shores. Thus it seems, that England produces criminals enough, not only to fill her own borders, but to people other islands and continents with them. Beginning at Botany Bay and Norfolk's Island, she has tried a new experiment in the theory of colonization ; she has actually peopled New Holland and Van Dieman's Land with cheats, thieves, and forgers. A wholly original state of society exists there, the guardians of the laws being the former breakers of them ; housebreakers and highwaymen are converted into jurymen and petty constables, and the pickpocket Barrington is appointed chief justice. We are curious to know what sort of criminal law is enforced in such a court ; their "revised statutes" probably consist of an inverted decalogue.

The barbarous character of the English appears, also, in the brutal sports which are indigenous in the island. The baiting of bulls and bears, it is true, is not common now, though it was much in vogue in the last century. But their proficiency in horse-racing and boxing is still the glory of Englishmen. To their eagerness for the former even their absurd pride of rank gives way ; and on the turf at Epsom and Derby, jockeys and members of the House of Commons, blacklegs and noblemen, meet and cheat each other on a footing of perfect equality. More fortunes and reputations are every year ruined at these noted places, than were ever sacrificed, in the same space of time, at the most noted gambling saloons of Paris. The cruelty to the poor animals is not the worst feature of this savage amusement ; every species of knavery, every extravagance in the way of gambling, is practised without reserve and without remorse. Drugs are given to the horses, or they are poisoned, jockeys are hired not to win, and various other expedients are used,

by which the ignorant and the unwary are plundered. And among the participants in these nefarious transactions are the noblest personages in the land. These abominable games are not only tolerated, but favored, by the laws ; they are called the “manly, rural sports of England.”

Another favorite diversion of John Bull is boxing, one of the most vulgar and savage kinds of personal encounter that was ever peculiar to a nation. Two blackguards, stripped to the waist, and surrounded by their seconds and “bottle-holders,” are put in the midst of a ring formed by blacklegs and noblemen, to pummel and bruise each other out of any vestige of the human shape. The most noted of these bruisers, the one who is able to thrash all his fellows in the noble game, is called the champion of England. Such a brute might well be chosen to sustain the fantastic part of the personage who bears the same title at that mountebank show called a “coronation.” In what estimation this sport is held appears from the fact, that, a few years ago, Gulley, one of the most notorious of these prize-fighters, was chosen a member of Parliament. At one of these encounters, between Tom Cribb and Molyneux, a negro, when the prize of victory was the “championship,” after a battle of thirty-nine minutes, the poor black was carried senseless out of the ring, and the whole kingdom resounded with the praises of the victor. His engraved portrait appeared in all the print-shops ; songs were indited in his honor, and his exploit was heralded in all the newspapers. And at this disgraceful scene, Lord Yarmouth, a senator, a diplomatist, and a statesman, was present, and, we believe, was one of the “backers.” The game not unfrequently terminates in the death of one of the parties ; and when this is not the case, the bruised and bloody combatant usually offers a more shocking sight than a man who has just undergone a frightful surgical operation. Certainly, the contests of the Roman gladiators with each other, and with wild beasts, formed, comparatively speaking, a humane and ennobling spectacle.

The evidences we have presented of the essential brutality and licentiousness of the English character are sufficiently striking ; but the picture would be incomplete, if a sketch were not added of the misery and oppression to which the laboring classes, the unhappy descendants of the subjugated

tribes of savages who once held the island, are exposed. The materials here are so abundant, and the facts so appalling, that we know not how to make a selection, or how to avoid wearying our readers with the sickening details. It is necessary to be brief and moderate,—to give only a few items, and those not the most fearful ones, in the long catalogue of woes and vices that lies open before us, confirmed by undoubted authority. We will say nothing, then, of the immorality, misery, and crime that exist in Ireland, where the conquest of the native barbarians is of most recent date, and where, consequently, the ruthless sway of the brutal victors is most keenly felt. We will say nothing of the condition of the Irish poor, huddled together in mud cabins by the wayside, in which fowls, pigs, women, and children occupy one room, and share one couch, the hard earth,—the human creatures clad in rags not sufficient for decency, feeding upon a little store of potatoes and buttermilk, going forth in crowds to beg, and often dying of starvation at the very gates of the sumptuous castles and country-seats in which the licentious nobles and pampered clergy of the land are wallowing in luxury. We will say nothing of the outbreaks of popular disorder to which these miseries urge the unhappy people,—of the conflagrations and murders that often abound over a whole district, till an overwhelming force of troops is poured into it, and after a number of the wretches have been transported or hanged, the remainder of the excited populace sink back into their dens. We will pass over the general condition even of the English poor, worn out by hard labor and dying of unhealthy food in their cottages, or sinking under exhausting employments and a pestilential atmosphere in the garrets and cellars of the manufacturing towns, or crowded into workhouses, in which a graduated system of starvation has been established by law. We will speak only of the sufferings and brutality to which the women and children are exposed, since these classes seem to have the strongest claims on the humanity of a civilized and Christian nation.

The reports recently made to Parliament, respecting the employment of women and children in the factories and the mines, present a multitude of heart-sickening details, to which, we dare affirm, neither the present experience nor the past history of any other country affords a parallel. In

most of the large manufactories throughout the kingdom, children, or rather infants, of both sexes, many of them being less than nine years of age, were kept at hard labor for twelve, fourteen, or even sixteen hours every day. Made dizzy with the hammering and clatter of engines and the whirling of wheels, breathing an atmosphere full of dust, and flying cotton, and every species of noisome effluvia, these little victims were kept at the incessant task under the lash of their tormentors. No provision was made for their moral or intellectual culture, and the pittance that was given them hardly supplied them with necessary food. Stunted alike in mind and body, bruised by kicks and blows from the brutal overseers, often falling asleep on their feet before the untiring engines, and dismissed at night to gnaw a crust for supper, and then to catch a few hours of slumber on the straw,—these poor children might well envy the condition, not merely of slaves in the West Indies, but of the brutes at home, in the stall and the sty. For a long period, this atrocious system of tyranny was continued without attracting notice or comment. British philanthropy had no time to listen to the wail of infants at its own doors ; it was busily occupied in preaching about the horrors of slavery at the antipodes, and in “hemming moral pocket-handkerchiefs” for black babies in the West Indies. At last, the subject attracted the attention of Parliament, and that body, two or three years ago, mercifully fixed the age of admission *at nine years*, and the period of work for children *at eight hours* daily, except in the silk factories, where they might be admitted at any age, and employed for any length of time.

Dark as this picture is, there is a still blacker page in the account of the infamous treatment of children in England. British barbarity has hunted its victims into the bowels of the earth, and in the depths of the coal mines atrocities are practised, the bare recital of which makes the whole heart sick and the head faint. To comprehend the nature of the employment, it is necessary to understand the construction of the mines. Perpendicular shafts are sunk to a great depth in the earth, and from the bottom of them horizontal galleries, usually several hundred yards in length, branch off in various directions. At the end of one of these passages, in a dark but hot cell, the air filled with the stifling coal dust,

and feebly lighted by a single lamp, a swart and brawny man, entirely naked, is at work with a shovel and pickaxe, breaking down the coal from its primitive bed, and heaping it into little wagons. Male and female children, from four to twelve years of age, are employed to pass the whole length of these galleries on their hands and knees, dragging these wagons behind them, to the foot of the shaft. The necessity of employing very young children for this work arises from the low and narrow dimensions of the passage, which is often but twenty, and seldom more than thirty-two, inches high. The poor child, wearing only a pair of coarse and ragged trousers, is fitted with a girdle to which a chain is attached, that passes between its legs, and is fastened to the wagon behind. Slowly then, through the long gallery, over the broken and sharp surface, often through water several inches in depth, the poor wretch creeps on its hands and knees, dragging the heavy weight behind. Sometimes, instead of wearing the girdle and chain, it creeps behind the wagon, the forehead resting against it, and thus pushing it forward. The skin is often rubbed and bruised against the board or by the pressure of the girdle, and the heavy chain strikes against the legs and excoriates them. And to these sufferings, half-naked girls, from six to twelve years of age, are exposed for twelve hours in the day. Frightful accidents sometimes occur, from the earth above the galleries falling in, or from the explosion of the “fire-damp,” and the children are buried alive, or miserably scorched, or burned to death.

These facts appear so extraordinary and appalling, that it is necessary to substantiate them by testimony ; and the evidence lies before us, to an overwhelming amount, in two great folios containing the reports of the commissioners, made to Parliament in 1842. The commissioners visited the mines, and the evidence was taken on oath. The following is an abridged extract from the report of S. S. Scriven, Esq., sub-commissioner for inspecting the mining districts of Halifax and Bradford.

“ I have often been shocked in contemplating the hideous and any thing but human appearance of the colliers, who are generally found in a state of bestial nakedness, lying their whole length along the uneven floor, and supporting their heads upon a board or short crutch. Black and filthy as they are, in their

low, dark, heated, and dismal chambers, they look like a race fallen from the common stock. It did not much surprise me to be told, that old age came prematurely upon them, and that they were ‘mashed up’ at forty or forty-five. The only wonder is, that human life should be even so far prolonged in an atmosphere constantly impregnated with noxious gases, together with the exhausting effect of excessive perspiration.”

In respect to the number of children employed in the mines,

“ I should say they average at least twelve to every pit in the two unions (of Halifax and Bradford); there being upwards of 300 pits, it follows that there are near 4,000 children and young persons between the ages of five and eighteen, employed as hurriers, thrusters, trappers, &c. Joseph Gledhill, a banksman, states, that he took his child into the pit at three years old; it was made to follow him to the workings, there to hold the candle, and when exhausted with fatigue, was cradled upon the coals till his return at night. This child he took *regularly* to work at the age of *five*; another he took between four and five, and a third between five and six. A reference to the tables will show seventeen out of thirty, in six pits, between that age and *nine*.

“ Hurriers are children who draw loaded corves or wagons, weighing from two to five hundred weight, from the headings to the main gates. In the thin seams, this is done upon their hands and feet, having frequently no greater height from the floor to the ragged roof, than sixteen, eighteen, and twenty inches. To accomplish their labor the more easily, they buckle round their naked persons a broad leather strap, to which is attached in front a ring, and about four feet of chain terminating in a hook. The younger children thrust in pairs. The average of their wages is 4*s.* 8*½d.* a week.

“ Girls from *five* to *eighteen* perform all the work of boys. There is no distinction whatever in their coming up the shaft or going down,—in the mode of hurrying or thrusting,—in the weights of corves or the distances they are hurried,—in wages or dress. Indeed, it is impossible to distinguish, either in the darkness of the gates (galleries) in which they labor, or in the cabins, before the broad light of day, an atom of difference between one sex and the other. They are to be found alike vulgar in manner, and obscene in language. But who can feel surprise at their debased condition, when they are known to be constantly associated, and only associated, with men and boys, living and laboring in a state of disgusting nakedness and bru-

tality, while they have themselves no other garment than a ragged shift, or a pair of broken trousers, to cover their persons?

“The children that excite the greatest commiseration are those who stand behind the doors to open and shut them for the thrusters to pass ; they are called ‘trappers,’ who, in the darkness, solitude, and stillness as of night, eke out a miserable existence for the smallest amount of wages. I can never forget the first unfortunate creature that I met with ; it was a boy of about eight years old, who looked at me, as I passed, with an expression of countenance the most abject and idiotic,—like a thing, a creeping thing, peculiar to the place. On approaching and speaking to him, he slunk trembling and frightened into a corner, from which neither coaxing nor temptations would draw him out.”

Thomas Mitchell, a boy thirteen years of age, gave the following evidence.

“I have hurried four years for Thomas Mitchell (his uncle) ; I do n’t know what you mean by *uncle* ; I never heard of Jesus Christ ; I do n’t know what you mean by *God* ; I never heard of Adam, nor know what you mean by *Scriptures*. I have heard of a Bible, but do n’t know what it is about. If I tell a lie, I do n’t know whether ’t is good or bad.”

Mr. James Wilcox, a proprietor of mines, says :—

“You have expressed some surprise at Thomas Mitchell not having heard of God. I judge that there are very few colliers about here that have.”

Sally Fletcher, eight years old, testifies :—

“I have worked here short of two years ; I cannot read or write ; I never went to any school, day or Sunday ; I go to work between six and seven o’clock in the morning ; I thrust corves with Josh Atkinson ; he is ten years of age ; I do n’t go home to dinner, I get it at the pit’s mouth. I always have my trousers and jacket on, and also my clogs. We sometimes hurry 20 corves a day, and have 400 yards to hurry them.”

Esther Craven, aged fourteen, says :—

“I have been hurrier for Joseph Ibbotson all the time of five years. I have one brother a hurrier, and a sister a hurrier, and a little one at home. I get my breakfast before I come, and bring my dinner with me,—a piece of cake ; when I go home, I get milk and meal, sometimes potatoes. I hurry in trousers,

bare-legged, and a pair of old stays. Joseph Ibbotson often *brays* (beats) us ; he was beating my sister when you came down. I many a time hurt my feet by hurrying ; I get all the skin off my leg sometimes by the stones in the gate, and with the rail ends when they are loose. A pick struck me once and broke my finger. I cannot read or write. I never think naught about being brayed a bit by the getters."

Harriet Craven, aged eleven, says : —

"I am sister of Esther Craven. What made me cry when you came down was because Ibbotson had been braying me ; he flung a piece of coal as big as my head at me, and it struck me in my back. I have thrust for him three years. I cannot read or write ; I do not go to Sunday school,— never went in my life. I hurry in trousers, bare-legged."

And could no sharp cry of anguish, or dull groan under stupefying pain, reach even from the depths of these dreadful pits to the ears of the philanthropists of Christian and enlightened England ? Alas ! no ; they were occupied with projects for promoting the spiritual welfare of the Chinese, and for ameliorating the condition of the fat and indolent negroes, the happy though brutish dwellers in the tropical climate of the West Indies. Far be it from us to extenuate in any way the evil and the wrong of slavery ; but we may affirm, that the condition of the galley slaves in France, or of the blacks in Cuba and the Carolinas, compared with that of English children immured in the coal mines, is like the contrast of Elysium with Tartarus. We could almost find it in our hearts to adopt the project ascribed to the Spanish philanthropist, Las Casas, and advocate the bringing of negroes from Africa to be slaves in England, so that these infants might be released from the horrors of the mines, and be clothed, fed, and taught. The subject is now at last before Parliament, and probably some scanty and inefficient measure of relief will be proposed and enacted ; but no compensation can be made for past sufferings, nor will any effectual preventive of such cruelties be established for the future, lest it should somewhat diminish the enormous incomes of a few of the coal-digging nobility.

As we have been led to speak incidentally of slavery and the slave-trade, it may be worth while to examine for a moment the exclusive and arrogant pretensions of England to humanity and disinterestedness in endeavouring to put a stop

to these evils. Let it be remembered, then, that little more than thirty years have elapsed, since Englishmen were the leaders in the abominable traffic ; that under her laws slaves were first introduced into this country ; that English capital and English ships were largely employed in “Guinea voyages” ; and that there are men still living in Liverpool and Bristol, whose immense fortunes were solely acquired in this trade. John Newton, the pious friend of Cowper, once commanded a Guinea ship, and was accustomed, in his trips to Africa, to provide himself with a large store of “prayer-books and handcuffs.” The traffic was long obstinately defended in Parliament, and the speeches of some of the most eminent British statesmen, in its support, are now on record among the published debates. “For twenty-five years,” says Lord Brougham, “I am ashamed to repeat, for twenty-five years, to the lasting disgrace of the Parliament, the African slave-traffic was thus defended.” Tardily and reluctantly did England consent to the abolition of the trade, more than twenty years after the time when the United States, by the adoption of the Federal Constitution, had fixed a period for its termination. Still, she continued to hold slaves in the British West Indies, and to subject them to sharper sufferings than any that the corresponding class were exposed to in any other country. Such were the barbarities practised in Barbadoes and Jamaica, that, in spite of the natural fruitfulness of the negro race, there was, between 1818 and 1824, a frightful decrease of the slave population ; while the negroes in North America, where they were better fed and better treated, multiplied rapidly. We quote the fervent language of Lord Brougham, applied to one case of English cruelty towards slaves, which occurred as lately as 1826.

“It is painful to me that I cannot stop here,—that I must try faintly to paint excesses unheard of in Christian times,—which to match we must go back to heathen ages, to the days and to the stations, wherein absolute power made men, but pagan men, prodigies of cruelty exaggerated by caprice,—that I must drag before you persons moving in the higher walks of life, and exerting proportionable influence over the society they belong to: an English gentleman and an English gentlewoman accused, guilty, convicted of the most infernal barbarity ; and an English community, so far from visiting the enormity with contempt

or indignant execration, that they make the savage perpetrators the endeared objects of esteem, respect, and affection."

It is useless to give the details of the case here referred to, or of a multitude of others, which incontestibly establish the fact, that, while the English continued to hold slaves, the essential brutality and savageness of the English character led to a treatment of them far more inhuman than that of the negroes owned by Spanish, Portuguese, or American masters. The institution existed under the protection of British law, and these atrocities were practised by British hands, till about ten years ago, when the first great step was taken by Parliament for the abolition of slavery. The policy then commenced was consummated only six years ago, when the act was passed for the final emancipation of slaves throughout the English colonies. And thus having professed a sullen and dilatory repentance, having thus lately cleared her own skirts of an evil which she had done more than any people in the world to establish and perpetuate, while the gold earned for her by slaves was still in her coffers, and before the chains had yet grown rusty with which she had bound them, England suddenly appoints herself *custos morum* for the universe, and attempts, by Quintuple Treaties and other means, to bully all the nations of the earth into philanthropy.

The repentance of a profligate and a debauchee, if it be but sincere, may justly demand from mankind a fair measure of charity and forbearance. We would not taunt him with his former vices ; we would not always open before him the foul record of sins not yet atoned for, and of a course of iniquity so long pursued, that it has left a permanent taint in the constitution. But the zeal of the new convert to virtue must be tempered with some discretion and humility. He must not arrogantly claim the privilege, that belongs only to men who have always preserved a spotless character, of rebuking with severity the imperfections of a fellow-man. He must not attempt to assume the part of Cato, when his own early career was that of a Catiline. He must not harshly censure the faults of another, lest men should be tempted to think of the devil reprobating sin. As long as slavery continues to be tolerated in America, as long as a single negro remains in the British West Indies, so long it behooves England to lay her hand upon her mouth, and to bow her head in

the dust ; for the institution and the man are there in consequence of her own acts.

Of the tyrannical character of the English government, and the inhumanity of the people when engaged in war, the present condition and past history of Ireland afford the most melancholy proofs. Few pages in the annals of any nation are so deeply stained with blood as the records of the Irish rebellion in 1798. The North American savages might have learned a lesson from the atrocities practised on both sides, — by the insurgents, maddened by a long course of suffering and oppression, and by the troops and magistrates who were employed to put them down. “ Although no public act,” says Plowden, “ sanctioned the picketings, stranglings, floggings, and torturings to extort confessions, yet under the very eye of government, and with more than their tacit permission, were these outrages practised, in breach of the constitution, and in defiance of humanity and policy.” We learn from the same authority, that, three or four hours after an unsuccessful attack by the rebels on the town of Naas, where Lord Gosford commanded, the royal forces murdered fifty-seven persons out of a crowd in the streets ; “ and many of them were shot when escaping from their huts, which were set on fire. Others were taken out of their houses, and instantly hanged in the street. Such was the brutal ferocity of some of the king’s troops, that *they half roasted and ate of the flesh of one man, by the name of Walsh, who had not been in arms.*” After the battle at Vinegar Hill, a house used as a hospital by the rebels was set on fire, in which many sick and wounded were burned to death. One ingenious mode of torture was the application of a *pitched cap* to the head of a rebel, or *croppie*, as he was called, because the insurgent party wore their hair short. If one of these “ roundheads,” or a person having any part of his dress of a green color, was seen in the streets, he was seized by the soldiers, and a cap made of coarse linen or strong brown paper, smeared with pitch on the inside, was put on his head, to which it adhered so firmly, that it could not be disengaged without laceration of the hair and skin.

These barbarities, it is admitted, were practised reciprocally ; though the most trustworthy historians assert, that “ more cold blood was shed, more property destroyed, more houses burned, and more women abused by the troops, than

by the insurgents." Parties of the former were sent out to scour the country, "who hunted, not unfrequently with dogs, in the brakes, hedges, ditches, and woods, to spring any unfortunate peasant that might have concealed himself from the fury of these blood-hunters." The practice of shooting prisoners in cold blood, without trial, was quite common. At Carnew, twenty-eight prisoners were brought out of the place of confinement, and deliberately shot by the yeomen; and at Dunlavin, thirty-four were shot without trial, and, among them, the informer, on whose evidence they were arrested. Every kind of mockery was practised, to enhance the bitterness of death. The rebel general, Murphy, "being a priest, was tauntingly desired to work miracles, scoffed at, and particularly insulted by a young officer, who went the length of offering indecent insult to his person; which so irritated his feelings, that, though on the brink of eternity, with his fist he knocked down the officer at a blow. He was then flagellated, and instantly hanged."

The accounts of such atrocities must appear incredible; but we have not made a single statement that is not confirmed by Plowden, the able and faithful historian of Ireland. Let the reader remember, that these acts were perpetrated within the lifetime of the present generation, in a Christian land, under a government that professes to be the most civilized, intelligent, just, and humane of any on the globe. We are not here reciting traditional tales of the cruelties practised in the contests of the Danish pirates and Norman invaders with the native, painted barbarians of the island; we are not narrating the horrors of the war of extermination waged by the infidel Turks against the Greeks; we have simply culled a few facts from the history of Ireland under the administration of Cornwallis, Castlereagh, and Pitt. And these deeds were done by men who affected to shudder at the crimes of the first French revolution; who wept over the fate of the victims of the guillotine; who are now besieging all the courts of Europe with importunities to put a stop to the slave-trade; and who lift up their voices in righteous indignation, when they hear that Lynch law has been occasionally practised in a frontier town in the backwoods of America, in order to drive some gamblers and horse-jockeys out of the neighbourhood. What consistent humanity! What just, enlightened, and impartial philanthropists!

If we look at the foreign policy of England,—her intercourse with other countries, her diplomacy in peace, and her conduct in war,—we find fresh and striking illustrations of the perfidy, cruelty, and injustice of the government, supported and sanctioned by the people. The full proof of this assertion would carry one over a wide tract of the recent history of the country, and fill a volume rather than an article. We are able only to glance at two or three passages in the last great struggle of England with France. The first point to be noted is, that the war itself was brought about by a gross and shameless violation of faith on the part of the former country. She had formally covenanted to surrender Malta, and though the performance of this engagement was demanded again and again, she obstinately refused to yield possession. The avowed breach of a solemn treaty, executed only a year before, was considered as nothing, so long as her strength at sea enabled her to be faithless with impunity. Bonaparte indignantly remarked to the English minister, “The English people have no respect for treaties; henceforth, they must be shrouded in black crape. Woe to those who violate them! they must answer for the consequences to all Europe.”

A still more atrocious act, in violation of plighted faith and the laws of nations, was committed by the English government in 1804, by which Spain was compelled to take part with France in the war against Great Britain. The arrogant demands and hostile aggressions of the latter country had failed to drive the feeble Spanish government out of that neutral position, in which alone it could hope for any safety from the piratical attacks of that power, which then seemed to covet the title of “the great robber of the seas.” But England was not thus to be foiled, when she wished for war as a pretext for plundering an inert but wealthy people. The treasure frigates of Spain were on the ocean, homeward bound from America, bearing an immense sum in bullion and coin. Without any declaration of hostilities, in a state of profound peace, which the Spanish ministry had dearly purchased by submitting to every insult and aggression, “at the very moment when English vessels were enjoying the full rights of hospitality in the harbours of Spain,” England resolved to seize and plunder these frigates. A naval force, just sufficient to make resistance hopeless, though

not large enough to justify the Spanish commander in striking his flag without a contest, was sent out on this freebooting expedition. The squadrons met, and an action ensued, in which, after one of the Spanish vessels was blown up, and nearly four hundred Spaniards were killed, the three frigates were captured, and, with the treasure they contained, amounting to more than ten millions of dollars, were carried into an English port. A more high-handed act of piracy and murder on the high seas never was committed — we will not say, by a civilized nation — but by the buccaneers of the West Indies, or by the corsairs of northern Africa. The ministry and the nobility of England, who sanctioned the deed, showed that they had not only inherited, but had improved upon, the cruelty and lawlessness of their ancestors, the piratical Danes and Normans. Mr. Pitt and Lord Hawkesbury seemed to be emulous of the reputation of Captain Kidd, and if strict justice had been meted out to them, they would have “suffered,” like that noted freebooter, at Execution Dock. In vain did a few members of the opposition in Parliament raise their voices against this deed, as “an unwarrantable invasion of the rights of nations, and an act derogatory to the honor of the British name.” To acknowledge the criminality of the action was to assume the duty of making restitution of the money ; and the English people were bribed by the ten millions of dollars to sanction the conduct of their ministers, and to share their guilt.

Mr. Alison, the Tory historian of the war, who seizes every occasion and pretext to defend the conduct of his countrymen, and vilify that of their antagonists, is shamed into impartiality by the flagrant character of this transaction, and is compelled to speak of it as “the darkest blot on the character of England which the annals of the revolutionary war can exhibit.” We differ from him in opinion, and think the censure is too strong. Three years afterwards, a deed of darker atrocity, surrounded with greater horrors, stained more deeply with blood and crime, was ordered by the ministry, was effected by the army and navy, and was sanctioned by the parliament and the people, of Great Britain. We refer to the bombardment of Copenhagen, and the seizure of the Danish fleet, in 1807. The two countries were at peace with each other, the most amicable relations existing between

them, and not the slightest complaint was made of the conduct of the Danes. At this period, England suddenly demanded, that the Prince Royal of Denmark should surrender his whole fleet into her keeping, to be retained till the conclusion of the war ; and that this modest request might be made with due formality, it was brought to Copenhagen by an envoy who was accompanied by twenty-seven ships of the line, and twenty thousand land troops.

Though the Danes were wholly unprepared for hostilities, the ramparts being unarmed, the fleet unequipped, and few regular soldiers within the walls, the Prince indignantly refused to submit to the arrogant demand. “ No example,” said he to the British envoy, “ no example is to be found in history of so odious an aggression as that with which Denmark is menaced ; more honor may now be expected from the pirates of Barbary than the English government. You offer us your alliance ! Do we not know what is its worth ? Your allies, vainly expecting your succours for an entire year, have taught us what is the worth of English friendship.” As the Danes persisted in this refusal, the envoy coolly informed them, that “ the horrors of a besieged and bombarded capital must fall on their own heads.” The troops were accordingly landed, the ships were drawn up before the city, and the bombardment began, and was continued for three days and nights. The inhabitants sustained with heroic resolution the flaming tempest ; but in spite of all their efforts, the conflagration spread with frightful rapidity. “ From the top of a tower,” says an eyewitness, “ I beheld the extent of the devastation ; whole streets were level with the ground ; eighteen hundred houses were destroyed ; almost every house in the town bore some marks of violence ; fifteen hundred of the inhabitants lost their lives, and a vast number were wounded.” The Danes defended themselves like men, but the obvious danger of the total destruction of the city at last compelled them to yield ; and the only terms they could obtain were the unconditional surrender of the whole fleet, and all the artillery and naval stores that the place contained. The English armament then returned, carrying “ the magnificent prize ” of eighteen ships of the line, fifteen frigates, and a number of smaller vessels.

“ The Copenhagen expedition,” says Mr. Alison, “ ex-

cited a prodigious sensation throughout Europe ; and as it was a mortal stroke levelled at a neutral power, without any previous declaration of war then ascertained, or ground for hostility, it was generally condemned as an uncalled for violation of the law of nations.” * “ Blood and fire,” said Napoleon, “ have made the English masters of Copenhagen.” A general cry of indignation burst forth against them, and was echoed all over the Continent, and throughout the civilized world. No language is strong enough to characterize an act of such atrocity that it would be difficult to find a parallel to it in the annals of mankind. The common epithets, with which we stigmatize the conduct of the pirate and the felon, seem ludicrously inadequate to describe a crime of such stupendous magnitude. It is little to say, that it combines the guilt of highway robbery, arson, and murder ; for never before were these crimes committed on so grand a scale. Amidst the flames of that devoted capital, on which the storm of war suddenly burst with such ruthless violence, while its inhabitants were looking up in confidence to a peaceful sky, in which murdered women and children sunk down by the side of the strong men and active

* Mr. Alison contradicts himself more than once in his comments upon this affair, and exhibits in this and other places a pitiable confusion of ideas, that we can hardly reconcile with his other high qualities as a historian. The passage quoted above seems to convey a strong censure upon this measure of the British ministry ; but on the very next page, he alludes to the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit as affording a complete vindication of this abominable breach of international law, and showing that “the conception of the measure was honorable to the government.” Then again, he goes on to speak of the detestation with which the act was regarded by a small party of his countrymen, as being “ creditable to the public mind and the severe principles of morality which religious faith and long established habits of freedom had produced in Great Britain.” This is admirable. If the measure itself was an *honorable* one, how happens it, that it was *creditable* to the moral feelings of a portion of the British public, that they visited it with the severest censure ? And what shall we think of the historian, who concludes his account of the expedition to Copenhagen with the following ludicrous exhibition of twaddling morality and national self-esteem ? “ Contrasting this honorable feeling (the detestation aforesaid) with the utter confusion of all moral principle which in France resulted from the Revolution, and the universal application to public measures of no other test than success, it is impossible to deny, that the religious feelings and the tempered balance of power, which in England both saved the country from a disastrous convulsion, and, by restraining the excesses of freedom, preserved its existence, were equally favorable to the maintenance of that high standard of morality, which, in nations as well as individuals, constitutes the only secure basis of durable prosperity.” Certainly, Mr. Alison’s *forte* does not consist in irony.

combatants, pierced by sharp shot, or buried under the fall of the burning houses,—in that dreadful scene, continued for three days and nights, appeared an awful illustration of that regard for honor, justice, and humanity, which has been claimed as characteristic of the British government and people.

We know it is urged, in palliation of this fearful crime, that Napoleon was prepared to seize the Danish fleet, if England had not anticipated him. But what consolation did this plea afford to injured Denmark, thus placed between rival plunderers? Is the highwayman justified in robbing and murdering the peaceful traveller, because he knows there is another footpad on the road, into whose hands the victim will be likely to fall, if he escapes from the first robber? Instead of palliating the crime, this plea only fixes a deeper stain on the character of the perpetrator, who confesses that he is actuated only by a desire to rival another brigand in the career of blood and crime. And yet, the government which is guilty of such acts, and is guided by such motives, assumes the right of reading a moral lecture to other nations on the obligations of natural law, and the necessity of conforming to the high principles of humanity and justice!

It is impossible that so peculiar a history, and so unexampled a state of morals, as the preceding brief survey has shown to exist in England, should not have produced singular effects in the literary and poetic development of the nation, when it had partly emerged from barbarism. We trace the successive steps of their intellectual formation in the changes through which their anomalous language has passed, from the earliest monuments that have come down to us. We have nothing to illustrate the language of the original Tin-men, who held the island in the time of Cæsar and Tacitus; but the culture of the Romans must have had some influence upon the speech of that portion of the inhabitants who were not too leaden to receive it. After the Danes and Saxons had conquered the tribes more barbarous than themselves, some traces of a poetical spirit begin to appear. But the piratical Danes and robber Saxons were men of large fists and small brains; men of many blows and few thoughts; harsh, hard-headed, gruff as northern bears, whom they strongly resembled in temper, manners, and tones of voice. Their language corresponded to the paucity

of their ideas ; it was brief, snappish, growling ; harmonious as the howl of wolves, intelligible as the scream of vultures. The best productions of Anglo-Saxon genius have but little interest, except as the monuments of an ancient race. They are obscure and awkward ; they abound in those tricks of assonance and alliteration, that indicate the love of the savage for jingle, and the total absence of art and refinement.

The Normans, bad as they were when judged by any moral standard, were less barbarous than the Saxons. They had some tincture of civility, inherited, at a long remove, from the Romans. Their language, degenerate daughter as it was of the ancient mother, was not a stranger to the expression of gentle sentiments, or to the poetry of the softening passions. They came in, it is true, like a swarm of vagabond robbers ; but they brought with them the elements of culture, and a certain high aristocratic cast of manners and countenance, which doubtless benefited the boorish tribes over whom they tyrannized. They made slaves of the churls whom they found on the island, and, to a certain extent, by their own somewhat polished dialect, supplanted the Saxon language, which was wholly insufficient and unfit for the wants of civilized life. The Norman French became the language of the court and the politer circles,—politer only in comparison with the Saxon savages. In the natural progress of things, an amalgam of the two was produced, by the eclectic process of adding to the Saxon the words expressive of those ideas which had never entered the hard heads of the barbarians. It is a curious proof of the entire absence of civilization in the Saxon race, that the Norman French supplied the language of the island with nearly all the terms descriptive of articles of food, when prepared for the use of civilized man, while the names of the raw materials remained Saxon ; proving, by the incontestible evidence of etymology, that the Saxons were scarcely acquainted with the common arts of cookery, and probably devoured their food like the beasts of prey. We may remark, in confirmation of this view, that the Norman aristocracy of England have been obliged, ever since the Conquest, to import their cooks from France, having found their subjects wholly incapable of preparing a dish of any description, that a stomach of less power than an ostrich's could digest. The Saxon sheep was boiled into

Norman mutton ; the Saxon calf was *fricandeaued* into Norman veal ; the Saxon ox was roasted into Norman beef ; and so on, through the whole national bill of fare. This language, thus compounded of the rude Saxon materials and the more cultivated Norman, is substantially the spoken and written language of the present day, among those, at least, who claim to be civilized ; for the great mass of the English nation gibber their scanty thoughts in a complication of hideous sounds, which neither gods nor men can comprehend. They are not merely like their savage ancestors ; but having so long been trodden in the dust by the Norman robbers, they have lost the consciousness even of their former beastly liberty, and with it all the virtues, such as they are, of savage life.

From a nation composed of such discordant elements, descended from such dishonest ancestry, speaking a language made up of such harsh, jarring, and hostile vocables, it would be unfair to expect a free and harmonious intellectual development. At every period of their literary history, they have had to look abroad for models ; all the arts which exist in England have been laboriously transplanted from other countries, to whose genius the barbaric British mind was compelled to go to school. Music came from Italy, but, taking cold and growing hoarse in the eternal damps of that seabound realm, fled back again in dismay. John Bull was trained to dance quadrilles by the French, and he has succeeded as well as a dancing bear ; the waltz and transcendental philosophy were borrowed from Germany ; and surely, in the whole range of modern spectacles, there is not one so well suited to inspire serious reflections upon the uncertainty of human affairs, as an Englishman of the present day attempting to wind through the mazes of a waltz, or to thread a dark problem of Teutonic metaphysics. Historical painting has been attempted, but each attempt has been a failure ; portrait-painting has met with a little better success, because that branch of the art appealed to the personal vanity of the Normans, — the most self-conceited race, probably, that ever played off their fantastic tricks before high heaven. But what picture, displaying a particle of original genius, has ever been painted by an Englishman ? When, after the burning of the parliament-house, it was proposed to build a new one, and adorn it with historical pictures, so thoroughly ignorant were

the Tin-islanders of the principles of art, that the government was obliged to send to Bavaria, and intreat the illustrious Cornelius, who is one of the fifty or sixty great historical painters in that small kingdom, to help them out of their distress with his advice. He went over and tried to make the British barbarians comprehend something ; but his success was not very encouraging. The world is on tiptoe to see with what savage embellishment these slow-witted and aping islanders mean to blazon the halls that are destined to hold the wordy wisdom of the nation. He who wishes to know the best that British genius can do in the way of sculpture may look at Chantrey's equestrian statue of George the Fourth, which, with that delicate perception of appropriateness that marks all their insular attempts in the fine arts, is to form part of the monument to Nelson. A recent journal says, "It may now be seen, as the bard of Blarney singeth,

"Like Alexander or Helen fair,
Standing all naked in the open air,
Nigh the cocked-hat column of Trafalgar Square."

The statue of the profligate King, whose knavery degraded him even in the eyes of British blacklegs, is a fit companion to a monument raised by the gratitude of the nation to the Admiral-Duke, who shamelessly violated his marriage vows, lived in adulterous connection with a prostitute, and, to complete the tale of his infamy, at her bidding, put to an ignominious death, by hanging, a gray-haired Italian nobleman, who threw himself on British honor, protected, as he imagined, by the express and solemn terms of an amnesty.

It may be asked, if the English are such universal plagiarists, where they got their manners. What foreign nation had the honor of teaching John Bull the minor morals ? Where did he go to school to acquire good breeding ? Nowhere, because he has none. Here he resembles no other being under heaven ; "none but himself can be his parallel."

Turning, for a moment, from this cursory survey to the special subject of literature,—British literature, as some of the native writers humorously call it,—we find the same pilfering and aping disposition. Italy, Spain, France, and more recently Germany, have successively been laid under contribution to supply the deficiencies of English intellect. Even in individual cases, few and far between, where original talent was not wanting, as in that of Shakspeare, the

natural tendency of the Englishman, inherited through a long line of intellectual pickpockets, has broken out, and he has stolen, when stealing was quite unnecessary,—by preference, and, as it were, to keep his hand in. How little scruple had the Stratford deer-stealer, in enlarging the sphere of his practice ! With what natural ease and grace did he turn his light and nimble fingers to the conveying of plots, scenes, and long passages *verbatim*, from the works of other, perhaps forgotten, writers, to his own wonderful plays ! Milton was the very Napoleon of poetry ; he levied taxes and heavy contributions on all ancient and modern writers. Take away the loans he forced from the Greeks and Romans, and the large supplies from the Italian narrative poets,—reclaim the devils' battles, and silence the devils' speeches, which he stole from Saxon Cædmon, the old Monk of Whitby,—strip him of the ornaments which he has picked with grasping hand from every storehouse of the literary world, not disdaining to borrow largely even from the Jews ; and you will leave him as helpless as Bonaparte, after the battle of Waterloo ;—you will bind him to a barren rock of St. Helena in the ocean of poetry, an object of curiosity and wonder, and a warning example of the downfall of literary usurpers.

The highest effort of national genius is undoubtedly an epic poem. Shakspeare was too indolent to steal enough to make one ; Milton had several epic schemes, but executed none of them ; for, whatever “*Paradise Lost*” and “*Paradise Regained*” may be, they are not national epics. It was reserved to men of bolder and more aspiring genius to achieve this great task ; to place their names in characters of living light upon the immortal scroll of heroic bards. Homer heads the list of the epics of the world, and — *Robert Pollok* closes it. The constellation of English genius includes those bright stars, Cowley’s “*Davideis*,” Glover’s “*Leonidas*,” Joseph Cottle’s “*Alfred*,” and Robert Pollok’s “*Course of Time*.” Montgomery — sometimes called “*Satan Montgomery*” — has written a good deal of nondescript verse, which occasionally soars into the region of the English epic, but he is not in the least like Milton. Several other bards, more recently, have essayed the heroic strain, but no judgment of less authority than the consenting voices of successive centuries justifies us in placing a poet on the epic catalogue. We cannot, therefore, at present, class

such versifiers as Southey, Byron, and the other lesser names of the present age, with the great and famous worthies whom we have above enumerated. A rapid survey of these works will show what the British have regarded as epic poetry ; what a very peculiar conception they have formed of this the highest display of genius. The following lines are part of the invocation with which, according to ancient custom, the grocer bard of the “*Davideis*” opens the high heroic strain.

“ *Ever thou my breast with such blest rage inspire*
As moved the tuneful strings of David’s lyre,
Guide my bold steps with thine old travelling flame,
In these untrodden paths to sacred fame;
Lo, with pure hands thy heavenly fires to take,
My well changed muse I a chaste vestal make!
From earth’s vain joys, and love’s soft witchcraft free,
I consecrate my Magdalene to thee !”

The Italics as well as the poetry are Mr. Cowley’s.

This great poet had an ingenious mode of bringing together abstract nouns and proper names, and by that means animating the one into something like life, and softening the others, so that they might not be too lively for the sustained flow of heroic verse ; thus :

“ *Much danger, first, much toil did he sustain,*
Whilst Saul and Hell crost his strong fate in vain.”

And again :

“ *Angels and men did peace and David love,*
But Hell did neither him nor that approve.”

As hell seems to have been Mr. Cowley’s strong point, we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of copying a part of his description of it, again following his Italics.

“ *Beneath the dens, where unfletched tempests lye,*
And infant winds their tender voices try,
Beneath the mighty ocean’s wealthy caves,
Beneath the eternal fountain of all waves,
Where their vast court the mother-waters keep,
And undisturbed by moons in silence sleep,
There is a place, deep, wondrous deep below,
Which genuine night and horror does o’erflow,
No bound controls the unwearied space, but hell
Endless as those dire pains that in it dwell.”

The following lines describe Satan's advent into these comfortable quarters.

"Once general of a gilded host of sprights,
Like Hesper leading forth the spangled nights ;
But down like lightning, which him struck, he came,
And roared at his first plunge into the flame."

We cannot withhold from our delighted readers the description of the way Saul jumped out of bed, after envy had put her "dear worm" into his bosom, to be her "viceroy."

"Th' infected king leaped from his bed amazed,
Scarce knew himself at first, but round him gazed,
And started back at pieced-up shapes, which fear
And his distracted fancy painted there.
Terror froze up his hair, and on his face
Showers of cold sweat rolled trembling down apace.
Then knocking with his angry hands his breast,
Earth with his feet; he cries, O, 't is confess,
I've been a pious fool, a woman-king ;
Wronged by a seer, a boy, *every thing.*"

The last part of the last line we understand has been greatly admired in England, as a most impressive close of a masterly description. What would be thought of such stuff among any civilized people?

Not content with the circle of English readers, the author of this wonderful epic translated and published it in the Latin tongue, to the end that it might be read by the whole literary world, and with a secret purpose, no doubt, of supplanting the *Aeneid* of Virgil. This secret purpose, so characteristic of English ignorance and arrogance, it need hardly be said, has had no other effect than to excite the laughter of the world.

The next great English epic on our list is the "Leondas," by Mr. Richard Glover. This famous author was the son of a tradesman, but he early felt the flame of poetic ambition, which burned out from his soul all thoughts of tea, herrings, and candles, and fired him with a determination to immortalize his own name by immortalizing the Spartan hero. The loftiness of his aspirations is well expressed by a motto on his title-page from Pindar. In accordance with the spirit of this citation, the muse-struck youth sat down and wrote nine mortal books of exceedingly blank verse. The rhythmical

character of this production is remarkable for its smoothness ; unaccented and accented syllables alternate without breaking the continuous and sleepy flow, from the beginning to the end. So great was the reputation of this epic, that, on the strength of it, Mr. Glover was elected to a seat in Parliament, as an excellent anodyne for a nervous House of Commons. “Leonidas” has not, by reason of its equable and slumberous excellence, any of those prominent passages which distinguish the “*Davideis*” of Mr. Cowley ; and we shall therefore adorn our essay only by short extracts — double extracts of poppy — from its paregoric pages. We first take Leonidas “at home.”

“ But to his home Leonidas retired.

There, calm, in secret thought, he thus explored
His mighty soul, while nature to his breast
A short-lived terror called. What sudden grief,
What cold reluctance, thus unmans my heart,
And whispers that I fear? Can death dismay
Leonidas, so often seen and scorned,
When clad most dreadful in the battle’s front ?
Or, to relinquish life in all its pride,
With all my honors blooming round my head,
Repines my soul ? or rather to forsake,
Eternally forsake, my weeping wife,
My infant offspring, and my faithful friends ? —
Leonidas, awake ! Lo ! thy country calls.”

The wonder is, not that Leonidas had to call on himself to awake after such a composing draught, but that he ever got sufficiently over the lethargy it must have produced to fight as he did at Thermopylæ. We must give a few lines more :

“ Thus passed these heroes, till the dead of night,
The hours in friendly converse, and enjoyed
Each other’s virtue ; happiest of men !
At length, with gentle heaviness the hand
Of sleep invades their eyelids. On the ground,
Oppressed with slumber, they extend their limbs ;
When, sliding down the hemisphere, the moon
Now plunged in midnight gloom her silver head.”

This is what the English — the *grosse Krämernation*, the great shop-keeping nation — trumpet to the world as epic poetry !

The third epic on our list is “Alfred,” in twenty-four

books, by Joseph Cottle. It is fully equal to the Iliad in the number of lines ; it resembles the Iliad in having a national subject, and in containing a great deal of swearing and killing. It is, however, more *subjective* than the Iliad ; that is, we see more of the personality of Mr. Cottle in “Alfred,” than we see of the personality of Homer in the Iliad. For instance, the singer of Chios opens with the following invocation :

“ Sing, O Muse, the wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus.”

The bard of Bristol, with a loftier consciousness, exclaims,

“ Alfred, victorious o'er the Danes, *I sing.*”

We must give a few lines of the admired speech of Ivar.

“ At Regner’s name, Ivar uprose ; his eye
 Beamed fearful indignation, when he cried,
 ‘ Death to our foes ! my spirits thirst to see
 The blood of Saxons flowing ocean-like
 Before my greedy eyes, whilst ever round
 Some mangled corse, writhing in agony,
 Shall add new transport to my bounding heart.
 Odin, immortal chief ! I hear thy call,
 And like thee, forth I go, to scorn the looks,
 And scatter wide the bones, and heap the skulls
 Of vanquished enemies. Death, view in me
 Thy proudest champion, soon ordained to swell
 Slaughter’s rank pile, and for the ravenous wolves
 Provide new banquets ! By the rapturous hope
 Of one day joining the celestial throng
 Amid Valhalla, hearing, as I stalk,
 From each brave warrior, gratulations loud : —
 By that proud confidence, here do I swear
 To scorn all mercy.” ”

And he keeps his word ; for he goes on through two terrible pages of like bombast, breathing nothing but fire and slaughter. From one of the innumerable fine descriptions, we cite two or three lines :

“ The third approach to earth
 Is through an avenue, at whose dark mouth
 Two furious toads, opposing, stand and spit
 Their deadly venom, whence the pestilence
 Steams up.” ”

O Joseph Cottle ! — The well known and heroical incident
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that befell the cakes in the neatherd's cottage, is thus related to her husband by the scolding dame, who had but too just cause for anger : —

“ Never came beneath a door a man
More thoughtless, or perversely bent on dreams
Bewildered. Many an hour he sits and hums
About old Cædmon, and then stops and frowns
At something in the air ; then rises up,
And walks with stately mien, then sits again,
And shaves his bow, or, with more furious eye,
Gazes in vacancy. In truth, I think
The man half mad ; for, not an hour ago,
The household cakes, that yonder lie half burnt
And smoking on the hearth, I to him gave,
And with strict charge, and caution often told,
Warned him to turn, and with due care preserve
From scorching heat ; then to the fields I sped
To mark the kine ; and now again returned ;
When, as the door I opened and looked round,
There on his wicker chair he sat, his eyes
Fixed on the floor, his knife beside, while near
Lay many a half-formed bow. But, sad to tell !
My cakes, for thy return, prepared to show
A wife's affection, lay involved in smoke !
Now nothing worth ! and this great loon at hand,
Unmindful. ‘ Dost thou hear ? ’ she cried,
And stamped her foot, and, with indignant ire,
Vowed oft and bitterly, no other food
His lips should touch, till he had eaten all
The black-burnt cakes.”

No reader of discriminating taste can fail to admire the perfectly un-Homeric style of this whole description. Now what must our readers think of English taste, when we assure them that this poem has passed through more than one edition, and that all who have read the work consider it a most remarkable production.

We have indulged so largely in heroics, that we almost fear to proceed to the next great epic, Mr. Pollok’s “ Course of Time.” But it is so universally admired in England, has passed through so many editions, has been reviewed in so many quarterlies, and committed to memory by so many old women, that we must spend a few moments on its brilliant beauties, by way of further illustrating the epic taste of

England. It is a highly religious poem, and its dulness is equalled only by the scandalous licentiousness of some of the favorite passages. We have no idea of citing these, even for the purpose of exhibiting the moral hideousness of the English character. This favorite epic has been so well described by an American critic, that we cannot resist the temptation to quote his introductory paragraphs.

"The Reverend Mr. Balwhidder, the author of the 'Annals of the Parish,' had the design of writing 'an orthodox poem, like *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, wherein he proposed to treat more at large of original sin, and the great mystery of redemption.' What he only contemplated, the Reverend Mr. Pollok has executed, and in a manner so satisfactory, so accordant, as far as we can judge, with the conceptions of the Reverend Mr. Balwhidder, as to leave no room for regret that his design was not carried into effect. The great popularity of Mr. Pollok's production is a sufficient pledge of its merit. The copy before us is of the fifth Edinburgh edition; and it has, as we are told, been twice stereotyped in our country.

"It is indeed a poem treating of high matters. The time supposed is some period beyond the consummation of this world. A beatified spirit, whom we should have supposed to have been that of a Calvinistic divine, if the writer had not informed us that it was the spirit of some great poet, is represented as giving an account of this world to another blessed spirit, newly arrived from a distant planet, and to two seraphs, who accompany him, for the purpose of having their curiosity satisfied also. He explains to them all those facts respecting the past and yet future history of man, which we find stated in Ridgeley's 'Body of Divinity,' and other works of like authority on the subject; and introduces a great variety of matter upon a multitude of interesting topics, such as pride, ambition, vanity, avarice, infidelity, Unitarianism, government, modern politics, and modern authors. The writer has made quite an extensive display of his powers; and we must confess, that, in attempting to follow him, our faculties have been so 'strained by this celestial colloquy divine,' that we could, we think, have 'sought repair' even from a novel by Lady Morgan. Our perceptions have become confused. We have at times almost lost the consciousness that we were reading. We seemed to make no progress; and were disheartened, like a traveller in one of those solemn deserts where nothing is to be seen but sand and sky."*

* *Christian Examiner*, Vol. VI., pp. 86, 87.

We give a single short passage, which has less to revolt the civilized taste than perhaps any other of equal length in all the ten dreary books.

“The other, Disappointment, rather seemed
Negation of delight. It was a thing
Sluggish and torpid, tending towards death.
Its breath was cold, and made the sportive blood
Stagnant, and dull, and heavy, round the wheels
Of life. The roots of that whereon it blew
Decayed, and with the genial soil no more
Held sympathy ; the leaves, the branches drooped,
And mouldered slowly down to formless dust ;
Not tossed and driven by violence of winds,
But withering where they sprung, and rotting there,
Long disappointed, disappointed still,
The hopeless man, hopeless in his vain wish,
As if returning back to nothing felt ;
In strange vacuity of being hung,
And rolled, and rolled his eye on emptiness,
That seemed to grow more empty every hour.”

Satan Montgomery's very popular works we are obliged to pass over for want of room. The same is the case with a great many other favorite poets. Some departments, also, of English poetry will not bear touching on account of their revolting indecencies. English comedy, for example, is absolutely unreadable. Its genuine character was stamped upon it in the licentious and debauched reign of Charles the Second. Bawdry is the only wit the Englishman relishes or knows.

“For witty, in his language, is obscene.”

The indescribable nastiness and brutality of the British comic theatre are even greater than the history of the people would lead us naturally to expect ; but when we observe how naturally their religious poetry, like Mr. Pollok's, runs into licentiousness, perhaps we ought not to wonder at the excesses of the stage. Passing from this disgusting limbo, we enter upon a region where leaden dulness — prose and decency, at least — await us, — the lyric poetry of England.

We are far from regarding it as a just ground of reproach to the English, that their lyrical poetry is little better than a far-off echo of antiquity ; but we think it *is* a reproach to them, that they should be eternally thrusting their pretensions

to the lyrical character in the face of educated nations. In this particular, as in most others, what they want in the integrity of their assumption, they make up in swagger and impudence. To believe themselves, they are the finest lyrical poets in the whole world ; but with two or three exceptions, there has not been a lyrical poet of mark since the Saxon Heptarchy, nor before. Having no lyrical poetry of their own, they have imported such as their scanty learning has enabled them to get from other countries. But, alas ! how does the lyric muse lose herself amidst the damps and fogs of uncongenial England ! The lyrical poetry of all other countries is distinguished by particular characteristics, by its forms, coloring, and temperament. There is nothing of this kind in English lyrical poetry ; it takes all forms and colors. It is national only in one sense,—it never fails, opportunity serving, to hymn the praise of

“ *Britannia's happy isle,
Blessed by a patriot monarch's smile.* ”

Upon this point all the lyrists are unanimous. The want of historical elements is made up by the intensity of the glorification. The great topics are British liberty, British loyalty, British supremacy over the sea and — the East Indians. More unfortunate topics could not have been hit upon. To speak of British liberty, in the face of the crushed descendants of the Saxon savages ; of British loyalty, with two millions of Chartists ready to rise in arms, with all Wales in insurrection, with the starving hordes of Ireland on the eve of rebellion ; to boast of British naval supremacy, with the history of Dutch and American triumphs staring at them in the annals of the world ; is an absurdity of which nothing but the dull arrogance of the Englishman is capable. As to the East Indians, nothing can exceed the interest these oriental lyrists take in their picturesque heads and flowing limbs, — except the interest they take in their lacks of rupees and their lands. It is quite impossible to account for the incredible folly which tempts them to indulge in such themes, unless we refer it to the same infatuation which makes them boast of their morality, in the face of their filthy newspaper and weekly press, and the disgusting debaucheries of their priests and nobles, and to plume themselves upon their honesty, in the teeth of a government which has loaded the country with a debt it never dreams of paying, and despite a nine-

teen years' suspension of cash payments by the Bank of England, still fresh in the memory of the present generation.

Gray was a meritorious imitator of the ancients ; he explored industriously all the mines of the lyric poetry of Greece and Rome ; he is entitled to the praise of a skilful stringer together of foreign gems ; but he is no English lyrical poet. Cowley's metaphysical conceits were mostly stolen from the Italian. Dryden, Pope, and Addison wrote a few pieces of lyrical jingle, to be set to music on special occasions. Coleridge stole *his* lyrical poems, as well as his pretended philosophy, from the Germans. Campbell is a Scotchman, and so was Burns. Tom Moore is a licentious Irishman. The only representative, therefore, of English lyrical poetry is Henry James Pye, Esq., poet-laureate of George the Third. On account of his preëminence among the poets of his day, he was appointed to fill the place once occupied by the ponderous Ben Jonson ; and his new year's and birthday odes, composed in honor of that heroic and muse-inspiring Dutchman, George the Third, present the lyrical genius of England in a favorable light. They produced an immense excitement in their time, and continue to be read with unabated enthusiasm by the lovers of that highly popular work, the "Annual Register." That Americans may see what trash satisfies the coarse taste of the English, we quote two or three passages.

"O'er the vexed bosom of the deep,
When rushing wild with frantic haste,
The winds with angry pinions sweep
The surface of the watery waste ;
Though the firm vessel proudly brave
The inroad of the giant wave,
Though the bold seaman's firmer soul
Views unappalled the billowy mountains roll,
Yet still along the murky sky
Anxious he throws the inquiring eye,
If haply through the gloom that round him lowers
Shoots one resplendent ray, prelude of happier hours.

"So Albion, round her rocky coast,
While loud the rage of battle roars,
Derides Invasion's haughty boast ;
Safe in her wave-encircled shores,
Still safer in her dauntless band,
Lords of her seas, or guardians of her land,

Whose patriot zeal, whose bold emprise,
 Rise as the storms of danger rise ;
 Yet, tempering glory's ardent flame
 With gentle mercy's milder claim,
 She bends from scenes of blood the averted eye,
 And courts the smiles of peace 'mid shouts of victory.”*

The following stanzas, full of sound and fury, were sung on his Majesty's birthday.

“Triumphant o'er the blue domain
 Of hoary Ocean's briny reign,
 While Britain's navies boldly sweep,
 With victor prow, the stormy deep ;
 Will Gallia's vanquished squadrons dare
 Again to try the watery war,
 Again her floating castles brave,
 Terrific, on the howling wave,
 Or on the fragile bark adventure o'er,
 Tempt her tempestuous seas, and scale her rocky shore ?

“Or, should the wind's uncertain gale
 Propitious swell the hostile sail ;
 Should the dim mist, or midnight shade,
 Invasion's threatened inroad aid ;
 Shall Britain, on her native strand,
 Shrink from a foe's inferior band ?
 She vows by Gallia, taught to yield
 On Cressy's and on Poictier's field ;
 By Agincourt's high trophied plain,
 Piled with illustrious nobles slain ;
 By wondering Danube's distant flood,
 And Blenheim's ramparts, red with blood ;
 By chiefs on Minden's heaths who shone,
 By recent fame at Lincelles won ;
 Her laurelled brow she ne'er will veil,
 Or shun the shock of fight, though numerous hosts assail.”†

We rather think this is enough. If the reader desires more of this delectable poetry, we refer him to the volumes of the “Annual Register,” about the beginning of the present century. In the words of a brother poet,

“Here 't was thou mad'st the bells of fancy chime,
 And choked the town with suffocating rhyme,
 Till heroes, formed by thy creating pen,
 Were grown as cheap and dull as other men.”

* *Annual Register*, Vol. XXXIX., p. 442.

† *Ibid*, Vol. XL, p. 444.

If our readers are surprised at the tone and temper of this article, so unlike any thing which has hitherto appeared in the pages of this journal, we commend them to an attentive perusal of the paper from the "Foreign Quarterly Review," the title of which we have placed at the head of our remarks ; and "we conclude by saying," in the words of another of our respected English contemporaries, "that we have no national prejudices ourselves, nor any wish to foster them in others."

ART. II. — *Speeches and Forensic Arguments.* By DANIEL WEBSTER. Boston : Tappan and Dennet, 1830—1843. 3 vols. 8vo.

THE verbal honors of literature in this country are lavished with a free hand. The mind of the nation is held responsible for all the mediocrity which rushes into print. Every thin poetaster, who wails or warbles in a sentimental magazine, is dignified with the title of an American author, and is duly paraded in biographical dictionaries and "specimens" of native poets. Literary reputations are manufactured for the smallest consideration, and in the easiest of all methods. A *clique* of sentimentalists, for example, find a young dyspeptic poet, and think they see in his murmurings a mirror which reflects the "mysteries" of our nature. Two or three excitable patriots are in ecstasies at discovering a national writer, when they bring forward some scribbler who repeats the truisms of our politics, or echoes the slang of our elections. These fooleries, it must be admitted, are not peculiar to this country. They are now practised in most civilized communities. In England, a poem by Mr. Robert Montgomery passed through eleven editions, attaining a greater circulation in a year or two, than the writings of Wordsworth had obtained in twenty. The art of puffing, an art which has succeeded in consummating the divorce between words and ideas, is the method employed on both sides of the Atlantic for effecting this exaltation of mediocrity.

For our own part, we deny that the swarm of writers, to